

The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy

OFFICIAL ORGAN, THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

VOL. VI. No. 1

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ONE DOLLAR A YEAR

N O W

Now we shall convert our Natural Resources into Foundations for the General Welfare,

Not sources of private advantage.

Now we shall make the Public Needs the Occasion for Public Service,

Not sources of private advantage.

Now we shall make Scientific Discoveries the Means of Life More Abundant,

Not Sources of private advantage.

Now we shall make the Learning of the Ages the Cherished Possession of all,

Not sources of private advantage.

Now we shall make the World into an unfenced Garden for Men, Women and Children,

Not a Jungle surrounded by Waste.



DO NOT CLIP
THIS NUMBER

THE HIGH COST OF LIVING AND STATIONARY SALARIES*

J. EDWARD MAYMAN

Teachers are turning their attention from the study and discussion of pensions, promotions, ratings, and the like, to a very serious consideration of how to make both ends meet. It is not that these problems have been satisfactorily solved, nor that their significance and importance have diminished. Rather is it because maintaining a decent standard of living has become so arduous and absorbing a task, these days, that there is neither time nor inclination to continue the usual lines of endeavor. We must suspend, but not discontinue, activities in one sector in order to marshal all our strength and resources to resist a frontal attack in another. All of us are subject to the attack. Hence it behooves us all to make a systematic study of the situation in order to make an intelligent and effective counter-attack.

Aside from our general impression that the cost of living has been, and still is, continually soaring, we have the more specific index fingers taken from Bradstreet's. These figures represent the average cost per pound of 96 commonly used articles of food, clothing and shelter, for the years indicated. In the last two columns these figures are converted into a point system, with the average cost for 1892-99 and 1900-09, respectively, taken as bases of 100.

TABLE I.—COURSE OF COMMODITY PRICES FROM 1892 TO 1916

Year	Bradstreet's Prices	Index Numbers Based on Average for	
		Eight years 1892-99, inclusive	Decade 1900-09 inclusive
1892.....	\$7.78	114.1	96.0
1897.....	6.12	91.0	76.5
1902.....	7.88	114.4	96.2
1907.....	8.90	125.8	104.1
1912.....	9.19	128.6	111.5
1913.....	9.21	128.5	112.2
1914.....	8.90	126.7	114.9
1915.....	9.85	148.8	125.1
1916.....	11.66	171.1	143.8

* Owing to limitations of space many of the tables are condensed and all of the graphs are omitted. The Teachers' Union of the City of New York will soon issue a complete report on the subject. For most of the figures here presented the writer is indebted to Mr. Earle Clark, of the Russel Sage Foundation.

Those of us who entered the service in 1892-99 have to pay now an average of \$11.66 for the same commodities that cost \$9.19 in 1912, \$8.90 in 1907, \$7.88 in 1902, \$6.12 in 1897, and \$7.78 in 1892. Viewing the same facts from the point system, we note that for the same group of teachers, the cost of living has gone up from 91 in 1897 to 171.1 in 1916. It might be argued that the majority of the teachers now in the service did not enter in 1892-99, and therefore that basis does not apply to them. While this is true it cannot be denied that a considerable number of us did come in at that time, and that we have certain rights and privileges that must be respected and conserved.

To avoid a protracted controversy, let us take the average cost during 1900-09, the period in which most of the teachers now employed entered the service,† as the base of 100. What do we find here? The last column which is worked out on this basis shows that for this group of teachers—the majority—the cost of living has risen from 96.2 in 1902 to 143.8 in 1916. We see then that the high cost of living is affecting most vitally all of the teachers, and those longest in the service are hit the hardest.

Lest it be said that the present difficulty is caused by the war and that it is temporary, let me cite the following from Senate Document No. 847—1911, in which war is not mentioned at all:

"Among the many causes contributing to the advance in prices may be enumerated:

"Increased cost of production of farm products. Shifting population from food-producing to food-consuming occupations and localities. Immigration to food-consuming localities. Reduced fertility of the land. Increased banking facilities in agricultural areas. Cold storage plants. Increased cost of distribution. Industrial combinations. Organizations of producers or dealers. Advertis-

† See Cleveland Survey.

ing. Increased money surplus. Over capitalization. High standard of living."

The high cost of living, then, is something that has been threatening us for a long time. And there is no good reason to suppose that it will not continue to do so for a long time. The thing to do now is to seek relief.

If the teachers unite in self-defense for the purpose of ameliorating an intolerable condition, are they justified? They are justified no more and no less than other members of society that face the same condition. In the industrial and commercial field the situation has not only been faced, but it has also been remedied to a gratifying extent. Such newspaper items as "More Pay for 60,000," "Banks Give Bonuses to their Employees," "Standard Oil Raises Pay," "\$8,000,000 More Pay for 32,000 Tailors," "Fifty Companies Give Workers Higher Pay," and scores of others, are too recent to be forgotten. In addition to this we gather from the New York State Bureau of Labor Reports that the organized workers coped with the high cost of living by gaining actual increases, from year to year, in their weekly wages. Some of the net weekly wage increases are: 1901—\$1.73, 1903—\$1.79, 1905—\$1.80, 1907—\$2.54, 1909—\$1.70, 1910—\$2.45 and so on up to 1916. From 1914 to 1916 there is increase to 22%. It should be borne in mind that these increases are weekly, and not monthly or annual.

Salaried employees not only get very small monthly or annual increases, wherever such obtain, but their salaries are also stationary. In a recent letter to the writer Mr. Leonard W. Hatch, Chief Statistician of the State Industrial Commission, says:

"All the statistical evidence available tends entirely to confirm the prevailing impression that of all classes of persons affected by the rising cost of living the moderate salaried group, to which school teachers belong, has undoubtedly been most severely affected. That is, they have been behind the other classes in securing an increase of income to meet the rising cost of living. In other words, at the present moment that class probably has the strongest ground of any for demanding a readjustment of compensation."

Being forced to maintain a standard of living usually higher than that of their neighbors on a similar salary, and having their salaries reduced by reason of the decline in the purchasing power of their dollar from 100 cents in 1900-09 to 70 cents in 1916, the wonder is how the teachers manage to get along at all. A careful study of Table II will disclose some startling facts:

TABLE II.—DECREASES IN SALARIES OCCASIONED BY THE DECLINE IN THE PURCHASING POWER OF THE DOLLAR

Original Salary	Actual purchasing power 1916	Equivalent salary in 1916 to restore original purchasing power	Per cent of increase required to restore original purchasing power
1892-99			
\$720	\$418	\$1,241	
1,000	580	1,724	
1,500	870	2,586	
2,000	1,160	3,448	73.4
2,500	1,450	4,310	
3,000	1,740	5,172	
3,500	2,030	6,034	
1900-09			
720	504	1,029	
1,000	700	1,429	
1,500	1,050	2,143	
2,000	1,400	2,587	42.9
2,500	1,750	3,571	
3,000	2,100	4,286	
3,500	2,450	5,000	
1913-16			
720	563	923	
1,000	780	1,282	
1,500	1,170	1,923	
2,000	1,560	2,564	28.2
2,500	1,950	3,205	
3,000	2,340	3,846	
3,500	2,730	4,487	

Average 47.8

In planning this table, three groups of teachers were kept in mind, viz., those who entered the service in 1892-99, those who entered in 1900-09, and those who entered in 1912, at the time the so-called equal pay law went into effect.

By way of illustration let us follow the case of a teacher in each of the three groups. Miss A was in the service in 1898. She was then receiving a maximum salary of, say, \$1500. While in the service she has been spending considerable sums for courses, lectures, and other means of professional improvement. As a moderately progressive person, she was trying to keep up also with the changing standard of living. All these and many other necessary expenditures could not be curtailed without a loss in efficiency.

In fact, as the years rolled on new expenses were thrust upon her. Today, she finds that she can hardly get along. For her salary of \$1500 has shrunk to a purchasing power of exactly \$870. In other words, with increasing experience and efficiency, and burdensome social obligations, Miss A's salary suffers periodic reductions until in 1916 there is a net reduction of \$630. If society really wishes to protect Miss A and give her today an equivalent salary to restore the original purchasing power, it will increase her salary to \$2,586, or an increase of 72.4 per cent.

Mr. B, who is now supporting a growing family contracted with the city under a schedule that paid a maximum of \$2,500 in 1908. The purchasing value of his salary today is \$1,750—an actual decrease of \$750. To enable him to enjoy the benefits of his original salary, he should now receive \$3,571, or an increase of 42.9 per cent.

Miss C's \$1,000 in 1912 are now worth only \$780 and her salary should be increased to \$1,282, or 28.2 per cent.

By the use of this table the reader will readily determine for himself the value of his salary today, and the actual and the per cental amounts it should be increased to restore the original purchasing power.

At this point the keepers of the city's coffers respectfully remind us that we teachers are well protected against the high cost of living by a salary schedule that provides for automatic increases. In the first place, this is a specious argument. Those who enter the city service are not attracted by the minimum salary offered, but by the maximum salary which they hope to reach as soon as they can. It is the higher maximum that really persuades them. Surely, no one will be foolish enough to argue that the munificent sum of \$720 will attract capable men and women to the teaching service. Even the maximum salaries, which are widely advertised, fail to draw the desired material.

Secondly, if we examine the average

increases in salaries of teachers for the past few years, and compare them with the average increases in the cost of living we find a noteworthy state of affairs. Table III presents facts that are taken from Superintendent Maxwell's Annual Reports, and they cannot be denied.

TABLE III.—AVERAGE INCREASES IN TEACHERS' SALARIES COMPARED WITH AVERAGE INCREASES IN COST OF LIVING.

Year	Average Salary of Elementary School Teachers*	Amount of Increase in Average Salary	Per Cent Increase in Average Salary	Per Cent Increase in Cost of Living
1911.....	\$1,099.00	\$87.00	8.5	0.9
1912.....	1,190.00	90.00	8.2	0.9
1913.....	1,371.00	83.00	6.1	0.6
1914.....	1,368.00	9.00	0.7	2.3
1915.....	1,298.00	36.00	2.1	3.9
1916.....	1,305.00	7.00	0.6	14.9

* Including substitutes. If the amount paid them were deducted, the average salary would be less.

* On account of equal pay law.

" Decrease.

Particular attention is called to the last two columns. Note that while the per cental increase in average salary is growing markedly less from year to year, the per cental increase in cost of living from year to year is increasing at an alarming rate. Truly, the divergence in these two tendencies is staggering. Thoughtful people will increase their activities to find a solution.

At various times various people proposed remedies to relieve the difficulty. Superintendent Carr summarized their recommendations as follows:*

1. Keep down expenses, so that there may be funds for increasing teachers' salaries.
2. Standardize expenses, and in many localities there will be sufficient funds to pay reasonable salaries.
3. Utilize the various teachers' organizations for the study of tax laws and the laws and practices for distributing school funds.
4. Organize and maintain educational publicity committees.
5. Lastly, let us go to our homes, formulate a reasonable salary schedule for the particular locality in which we live, and then see if we cannot get it adopted.

Several committees of the Teachers' Union of the City of New York are at work on the first four propositions, and their findings will undoubtedly accrue to the benefit of the entire city. The last point is being tackled now. Definite demands are being formulated, and in due time they will be presented to the authorities. The campaign will be based on unimpeachable facts.

THE SCHOOL FORUM

NATHAN WILINSKY

Student, Bushwick High School, Brooklyn

[How can we make the work in our schools seem real to our boys and girls? That we are in great measure failing to do so few will deny. That it is most difficult to do so with our present curriculum, which is so foreign to the life of the children, again few will deny, except perhaps those school superintendents who deny that education should be intimately related to the life of the working world. Unless we do succeed in making our work seem real and alive to the children our schools will continue to be the failures which they are to a great extent. Our children—and our teachers too—will continue to feel that the most worthwhile thing in our schools is the vacation.

Our educational system is not so constructed as to make use of the experience of teachers in vitalizing of the work of the school. Neither do teachers make use of the point of view of the pupils. Here lies dormant a fund of useful ideas and suggestions, which, if brought to bear on our daily work, would help to accomplish that for which we are all working.

We are gratified to be able to present to our readers the suggestion contained in the communication we received from one of the students of the Bushwick High School. We are very much tempted to print the communication in full, but the limitations of space make it impossible.—Ed.]

There is a strong tendency, manifesting itself in divers places, to rectify, or at least to ameliorate the more evident evils of educational life. From all quarters come forth cries of "pupil self-government," "more club-work," "less extensive and more intensive work," "concentrate work in school, abolish home work," and more along these lines. Each has been tried, and either found entirely wanting, or its benefit has been so infinitesimal that its employment was inconsequential. Experiments, tests and inducements were tried upon the unsuspecting school boy—none directed specifically but with that vague feeling that although they "know not whither they are going, they are surely on their way."

We have seen that the collapse of "fads" was due to the fact that their exponents fixed a mold and expected

the student to conform to it, whereas human nature is dynamic and *grows* into forms, shortly transcending them. Accordingly, a project must conform with the laws of evolution. There is nothing so volatile and variable as mind and opinion. It is on this ground that reform must be inaugurated.

To the teachers there comes a call from the social soul, which is sharp and definite, and its function is unmistakable—this is the *Forum*.

The Forum utilizes this principle enunciated above by stimulating thought and discussion among the students. Wherever tradition has tried repression, the Forum encourages expression; under these circumstances wherein reform urged mechanical pressure to compel conformity, the Forum feeds the mind, and watches it outgrow all conventionalities. . . . What is the Forum?

Formally, it is club work exalted; a combination of a political mass meeting and the gathering of the pre-Revolutionary New England townsmen. The students of the school conveniently grouped, assemble at a definite place, some time during the school day. The chairman opens the meeting and gives the floor for free discussion, with the one condition that every speaker must answer questions, if they are put to him. There is no limitation, no taboo placed on topics.

The boys and girls do not fall over themselves in their eagerness to argue whether latitude as a concept is applicable to reality; nor do they care to summarize Shakespeare's literary predecessors and give an account of his indebtedness to each. But they do question whether the present system of society is worth perpetuating; whether evolution makes necessary the renunciation of religion; whether manual-training is only a fraud game to

kill their budding love for finer things or a convenient stepping stone to them.

Here, as is not usually the case with the application of a far-reaching principle, the results are immediately evident. Instead of indulging in theoretical speculation, the temptation of every writer, we shall derive our conclusions from the results of the experiment in the Bushwick High School.

The first open Forum was held two or three weeks before election day of 1916. It was frankly "taking a chance" to those who were interested in the outcome. Objections on the score of immaturity had been made time and again. The pupils came together in one of the class rooms, every seat was taken, and there were pupils standing all around the class and even in the aisles. The discussion began, and surely enough, it followed in the way I have indicated above—a full twenty-minute discussion of Socialism—from almost every economic angle.

The attendance was so large and the audience so enthusiastic that whereas it had been previously decided to hold but one meeting weekly, now one each day was inaugurated, and the interest increased in even greater proportion. Students stood in the corridors listening to the arguments . . . The experiment was a success.

Now mark the change in the once apathetic students. One lad, after a meeting, in which the chairman treated the rise of Christianity in Rome in a quite unorthodox manner, said, "Gee, I didn't know that there was so much in my Roman history. Now, I'll have something to think about." Another chap, who disagreed, was spurred to further study to obtain negative proofs. At another time the chairman rendered a talk on the fourth dimension and an intelligent attitude toward physics and geometry ensued. Not because of the talk directly, but because of the conflicting views expressed in the debate which followed. Each student yearns to make a convincing presentation of his own ideas, so his English is no longer an "abstract" science but a course full of hints which he can utilize.

I need not go any further with the exposition. The union of school and life work which has so long been the ideal of educators is almost completely realized, and the aim of education as a preparation for activities in the outside world is given its strongest impetus. No longer are the students ciphers on an adding machine, but intelligent factors who, working with clear eyes, a keen mind and ready helping hands, co-operate toward the construction of the purer democracy.

THE FLUOROSCOPE

THE REACTION from the first observation we have given our readers thru our Fluoroscope was very gratifying, altho for a time somewhat disconcerting. We learned in the first few days after the publication of the article that several principals had been cited as the specimen character by those who championed them as typical toughs for tyranny. But a second look thru the instrument must have given more exact

information, while lending a measure of grief that a better known personality had not been under the penetrating force of the merciless X-ray.

In the school where the real specimen character flourishes genuine signs of interest developed. THE AMERICAN TEACHER representative felt himself shunned by everybody, except where privacy might prevail. In the teachers' room when no more than two trusted

persons were present first indications of enthusiasm for the leading teachers' magazine were manifested, and the money for new subscriptions was passed nay, pushed into the hands of the representative. Old subscribers renewed, and others wanted to see the "article that everybody is talking about."

Some affronted defenders of "Things as They Are" started a "protest" of some sort which was offered for signature. What was protested against it has not been our pleasure to learn. But that is not nearly so important as is the fact that positive reaction was obtained from practically everyone immediately concerned in the conditions under which the school work is done. Those who react to a new movement in any way are captive ultimately. They have thought!

The second of our series is from a contributor whose soul has been stirred by the performances of official examiners and by the workings of examination systems. The system of examination for teachers is in a large measure responsible for the prevailing habit of looking for faults instead of building up ideals of value in teaching. As individuals the members of the Board of Examiners of New York City may or may not look ahead and think constructively. But neither as individuals nor as a Board, in a long history of twenty years, have they influenced in any important degree the development of better standards of teaching. This is a great pity, for they have had an open field and a fair opportunity.

II

My dear Mr. Examiner:

Some of us have had romantic dreams about you; others, less fortunate, rather morbid nightmares. At any rate, we acknowledge your prepotent influence on our haphazard destinies. May one who looks upon your omniscience with awe-inspired reverence vouchsafe to you what

has never hitherto been revealed to your Worship?

We teachers do not love you. That were preposterously human. We do not hate you. That were preposterously inhuman. From the bottom of our intellects we pity you. Aye, pity's the word. You must pretend to be competent in a hundred specialties. The pretence deludes no one but your pompous self. You pretend by magic intuition to probe in a trice the meaning of personality. Your judgments are so silly, they are no longer humorous; they are genuinely tragic. Why, in the name of modesty, do you bluff so unremittingly? A little intellectual honesty now and then is relished by the best of men. Why not confess your illimitable ignorance? Such healing good sense would lift the load of pretence from your craven soul and prepare you for the work-a-day humanities. Quit posing! Quit the foolish masquerading!

You work faithfully—true. Exactly so did the inquisitors of another more shameful age. You mean to be fair-minded. Remember that hell is paved with good intentions. You aspire to be honorable, so was Brutus an honorable man. You do the best you can under the circumstances. Ah, there speaks the uneasy conscience. Do you? There are thousands of excellent men and women who think (who know!) that you have a genius for doing the very worst you can under the circumstances.

How often after a week's Reign of Error do you, oh magnanimous Judge, lie down on a pillow of doubt and soberly review the sins you have wilfully, oftimes ignorantly and meanly committed against victims too powerless to protest, too sensitive to rebel, too indignant to care, too hopeless to reply? What is your conception of your duty? Your power for mischief makes countless thousands mourn. Inglorious automaton, what to you are the elemental emotions of sympathy and fellow-realization? You don't know it. Your humanity is being

crushed out of your anaemic heart by the impersonal grind of your too monotonous routines.

Mr. Examiner, we pity you. You are like some totemistic pole, plastered over with mumbo-jumbo decorations, fearful to the innocent eye of superstition, grotesquely absurd to the sophisticated eye of intelligence. Like that ancient totemic symbol, you inspire either low-brow fear or derision. You cannot inspire affection. I pity you.

ZADIG, JR.,

A constant reader of THE AMERICAN TEACHER.

THE TEACHER'S HEALTH

THE PENSION situation in New York City has compelled us to give thought to our health and vitality as affected by our daily work. After a day's exhausting work, it is easy to convince ourselves that our lives are being rapidly worn out and that nervous breakdown and early death is our lot. So prevalent did this notion become that the Brooklyn Teachers' Association made an investigation of the absence of New York City school teachers during the school year 1913-14 with the expectation of proving that the health conditions under which we labor are very bad. The Committee of investigation failed to find such conditions.

Now comes a report of a scientific study of the "Physical Disability of New York City School Teachers, a study of 3,877 records of absence during the school year 1914-15," by Louis I. Dublin, Statistician, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, published in *School and Society*, October, 1916. In his conclusions Dr. Dublin says that the facts brought to light in this survey warrants the conclusions that the occupation of teaching has no very deleterious effect upon the vitality of the teachers; that the death rate is undisputably low; and that the sickness rate among teachers is likewise low.

While there are some elements of uncertainty regarding the figures, it is obvious that they indicate a condition of marked healthfulness for the New York City teachers.

Certain of Dr. Dublin's recommendations are of interest to teachers. The Board of Education should make a careful inspection of the school plants to determine whether conditions of ventilation, heating, light, cubic air content, etc., are in accordance with the standards determined upon by the best technical information now available. He also recommends the rehabilitation of the Teachers' Retirement Fund with provision for the payment of benefits during illness so that teachers may not be tempted to continue at work while sick.

These reports of Dr. Dublin and of the Brooklyn Teachers' Association were based upon studies of cases of sick-leave in New York City, and in neither instance was an attempt made to study the health of the teacher while on duty in the class room. Such an investigation has been made by the Commission on the Welfare of Teachers appointed in 1914 by the New York State Teachers' Association. The object of the inquiry was to—

"collect facts relative to health and living and teaching conditions of teachers in the state; to call attention to undesirable conditions which may lower the efficiency of teachers, and, hence the efficiency of education; to get opinions of teachers and supervisors regarding causes of conditions favorable and unfavorable to health and efficiency of teachers; and lastly to propose measures which may improve teachers' welfare and efficiency."

It was found that more than one-third of the teachers reported upon "are nervous, irritable, low in vitality, or otherwise handicapped." Ill health is found to be the cause of most of the impaired efficiency, and ill health is found to be caused by insanitary conditions and excessive demands of school work." Add

(Continued on page 13)

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THE PENSION PROBLEM

The fourth and last article in Mr. Studensky's series will be printed in the February number.

WHY UNPROFESSIONAL?

A CORRESPONDENT whose letter we publish in this number maintains that "a paper that indulges in personal attack of any fellow-worker or official" is guilty of "unprofessional and unethical" conduct. There is no specification as to which of our articles deserves so severe a condemnation, and hence there is inadequate support given to the claim that our writing may be characterized as "unprofessional and unethical." But it seems that we have been deluding ourselves into thinking that THE AMERICAN TEACHER is about the most professional educational magazine there is. Anyway, we should like to know whose definition of professional conduct is being used by the correspondent, and likewise, upon what basis, aside from the basis of truthfulness, criticisms of "fellow-workers and officials" may be made safely and professionally.

However, being in the business, we should know when we have made a personal attack. It is barely possible that our much-discussed "Fluoroscope" article in the November issue is responsible for our losing this and some other subscriptions.

In common with all good people, we deplore personal attacks, and regret sincerely that we have never learned of a way to bring crime home to the criminal, or to lay unfitness and vulgar incompetence at the door of a public servant, except by the method of telling the truth about the individuals who do these things to us. A regular incident in the procedure of the courts is the pointing of an unerring finger at the culprit, and the remark, "You, you, are the one who has committed this crime against humanity." We shall assume that the courts have not established

this custom because of a desire to indulge in personal attacks, but rather because of a desire to meet a social, as well as an official, obligation. The AMERICAN TEACHER could not escape general condemnation if it turned the penetrating rays of its figurative instrument, the Fluoroscope, to any purpose other than that of carrying out its own honestly conceived social obligation of showing up the evils in an educational system, as they are worked out thru the agency of individuals, and at the same moment lighting up the way to better times and conditions. If any individual false to his trust, or his supporters good of intention but short of vision, feel offended it is within their right to cry out against "unprofessional conduct." It would be natural for them to do so if they have no other defense.

What must strike our readers as peculiar is the fact that anyone should stop a perfectly good subscription from going on, and doing still more good, merely because some indefinite person is stood up and searched with the X-rays. Was the light so cruel that it pictured a definite, recognizable person? If so, the light must have shown the truth. In that case the charge of unprofessional conduct does not mean bearing false witness or doing a dishonorable thing. Therefore we rest content.

Finally, we should like our correspondent to ponder seriously over the social, and if she pleases, the professional effect of joining hands with those whose "attacked" incompetence she does not take the precaution to examine into or to deny.

A LEGAL SCHOOL FOR COWARDICE

MEMBERS of boards of educations have little use for teachers who maintain the role of "timid protesters in a far corner," and who will not come forward when they believe themselves to be

suffering from unfair treatment, and make a courageous statement of the facts over their own signatures. Nobody has much use for such. There are even signs that the teachers have little use for themselves. Hence the prevalent lack of self-respect.

If society followed the stimulus afforded by feelings of that kind, teachers would be relegated to the position of menials. And teaching would be a menial job. With teaching as a menial job the education the children obtain will be of similar character. Therein lies the reason that boards of education should endeavor by every means within their power to break down the official barriers that protect injustice in the administration of any school.

Suppose that a teacher is working in a school where the principal desires to adorn the rooms and the corridors with handsome reproductions of the best products of art. The Board of Education has no money to meet the keenly-felt need, but the teachers have money which can be obtained by an appeal to "professional spirit," or by a simpler, more direct request to "come across." The teachers who do pay without sign of unwillingness are often taking the easiest way out of the difficulty. They may have in mind any one of many reasons for not making objection to the official graft. No one ever knows whether such teachers are cowards or not.

A teacher who will not submit to the official graft runs the risk of having his rating lowered or of being assigned undesirable tasks. In many ways also he is liable to be made to feel that he is a "cheap skate" anyway. If a teacher who does not pay brings his grievance to the Board of Education in the City of New York a preliminary inquiry may be held, but nothing final can be done, unless the teacher is willing to swear to his statement. A sworn statement is a public record, and as such should be effective in righting any

wrong in the petty administration of a school. But the Board of Education committee that receives the statement files it, makes its decision, and forgets about it. But the principal against whom the statement may have been made is on the job all the time. *He* never forgets. Naturally, there are few sworn statements by teachers concerning acts of injustice committed by principals. But there are doubtless thousands of anonymous letters and identifiable complaints by letter and by word of mouth brought to the attention of members of the New York Board of Education every year, but when the demand is made for evidence supported by oath, the kickers disappear like mist before the high wind. Not the least of the evil features of situations of this kind is the fact that everyone concerned in considering the cases regards the complaining teachers as cowards. Possibly they are. But what shall we say of the Board of Education committee that washes its hands of all responsibility by expressing regret at the absence of oath-supported evidence, *and makes no effort to get at the fact by means of its own unlimited power?*

Board of Education committees appear to be constituted more as courts than as grand juries. This seems to us to be a serious mistake, assuming that the Board may become anxious to break down the official barriers that protect all manner of petty injustice in schools all thru the great city by discovering the guilt of those responsible for evil, and by indicting them before the people.

SELF-RATING BY TEACHERS

In *School and Society* for December 30, Principal Alexander Fichandler gives an interesting account of an experiment in self-rating by teachers of a public school. Sixty-nine per cent of the teachers' ratings were identical with

those made by the principal. In the course of time experience in self-scrutiny should make possible the acceptance of the teachers' own ratings as final, "with the possible checking up of doubtful cases by the supervising staff," suggests the writer.

The further suggestion is made that such ratings should be the result of co-operative study on the part of teachers and supervisors, which is in accord with the views put forth in the past by THE AMERICAN TEACHER. In conclusion Mr. Fichandler says:

Unless the teacher acknowledges the justice of his ratings, they become merely sources of irritation and unhappiness, and consequently a cause of diminished efficiency. Neglecting for the present the larger problem, whether such ratings are necessary in our profession, we may accept the principle that only intelligent self-criticism can lead to real and permanent improvement. Whether the results of this experiment show that teachers have or have not the capacity for such intelligent self-criticism, it may be asserted that only thru continued and persistent practise of this kind will such capacity be developed.

AN EDUCATIONAL CHAUTAUQUA

A. H. FOREMAN

Principal Mars (Pa.) High School

There is a definite, dynamic purpose back of the American Federation of Teachers. There appears, however, to be no practical method for carrying its message to the thousands of teachers in this country. The American Teacher is, of course, doing pioneer work in its heroic efforts to make the teachers conscious of their slavery, and to direct them into the kingdom of self-respect and power. And I believe that the great need in the movement is to get this earnest, purposeful magazine into the hands of teachers everywhere.

But how shall we do this? How to get before the teachers the great, noble purpose of the American Federation of

Teachers is, it seems to me, a question pressing for an answer. Let us think about this matter. Let us think, dare, resolve to do something. I, for one, suggest the Teachers' Chautauqua.

This suggestion is based on the fact that to reach the people, leaders must go to the people, speak to them and with them inject spirit into their minds and hearts; fire, fuse, and solidify individual minds into conscious unity.

How can this be done most effectively? How can the forces of the Federation be organized to accomplish this great work? Is the scheme practical? Will it work?

In the first place the Educational Chautauqua would mean the convention of public school teachers at a designated place and time for the definite purpose of learning about their own problems and how the American Federation of Teachers proposes to serve them. This convention would be organized by a dynamic leader, sent out under the auspices of the Federation. For rural teachers he might meet them at their annual institutes, explain the purpose of the Federation, and arrange for a meeting at the close of their institute the next year. For city teachers other convenient times might be arranged.

This organizer would present at the first meeting a definite program, to be rendered in one afternoon and evening, at the close of the annual institute, by two or more strong leaders or other purposeful members of the Federation. Tickets at fifty cents each would be sold to the teachers, and subscriptions for *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* taken.

The foregoing is a general idea of the Educational Chautauqua. I confess that the details should be somewhat more definite in the way of getting money to begin the work. Yet I believe the method will work out, if backed by the heart and will of the Federation.

Official Section of the
**TEACHERS' UNION OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK**

BEWARE THE BY-LAWS

The by-laws of the Department of Education as interpreted by an authorized committee prohibit the collection of funds from the teachers by principals. The defense is commonly made that this custom of semi-official collecting is general, and so it is. Hundreds of dollars have been collected in single schools to buy presents for promoted or retiring principals, or to pay the fares of principals on vacation trips. Thus the milk of human kindness in education is kept sweet by the use of cash—the cash of teachers.

It happens once in a while that school furnishings are not provided by the Department. Statuary, pictures, and even paintings of principals are needed, but the Department has no money to spare for them. In emergencies of this kind some generous soul among the teachers starts a subscription list. If it is known that the principal has benignly blessed the undertaking, the money is forthcoming. When the principal himself conceives the project of making up for the financial inability of the city, and lets his desires be known, few are blind enough to hold back. Teachers believe with good reason that punishment for "lack of spirit" will be meted out in some form or other. Imposition of this kind is said to be rather common in the schools of New York City. But nothing can be done to help the teachers unless they themselves make the initial move.

A case of systematic collecting was brought recently to the attention of The Teachers Union. Miss Ida L. Morrison, Principal of P. S. 174,

Brooklyn, has been collecting money from the teachers of her school for the purpose of buying pictures. The walls were bare and needed decorating. Contributions to supply this need began in 1913 and have continued up to the present time, nearly three and one-half years. The rate for a time was fifty cents a month for each teacher. Later the rate was reduced to twenty-five cents a month. At about that time the war in Europe broke out, and compelled retrenchment in all peaceful departments of life.

Some of the teachers refused to contribute. Owing to this fact, The Teachers Union ultimately came into possession of information upon the basis of which a report of the case was made to Mr. William A. Willcox, President of the Board of Education. The President referred the case to the Committee on Elementary Schools. The President of The Teachers Union and the Principal of the school were summoned to appear before the Committee. Presumably the hearings of Board of Education committees are privileged proceedings. Nevertheless, the teachers of the system should know that the Board of Education will not overlook the infringement of this by-law. Naturally, the collecting of money to buy pictures in this particular school will cease.

The 20th century is an age of specialization. The Street Cleaning Department has Clean-up Day, the churches Church Sunday, the Health Department Fresh-air Week, etc. Why should not the Union emulate these worthy organizations? Your Press Representative believes that January should usher in a vigorous campaign for members. January first is the day for new year resolves. What will be your resolve? The editor makes the following resolution: I firmly resolve that I shall induce at least one teacher in the system to join the Union before the close

of the school year or else go without dinners for one month and donate the sum thus saved to advance the cause of Unionism in New York.

Do you realize what a firm adherence to the above resolution by all the union members means? It means the doubling of our membership, the strengthening of our treasury, the victory of our pension fight, the increase of our salaries, and the ultimate triumph of the principles for which the Union stands. Isn't this worth a little effort and sacrifice? Isn't the campaign worth while even if all of us don't succeed? Come, be up and doing. Don't be a parasite waiting for someone to do the things you ought to do.

Christmas has taught you the joy of giving; let January teach you the joy of doing. Have you any persuasive ability? Have you will power? Have you persistence? Have you the principles of unionism really at heart? Prove it to your satisfaction and to ours by taking the membership resolve and by sticking to your self-assigned task until victory crowns your efforts as it surely will.

THE GREATEST UNION EPIC

On January one I firmly resolve,
For one month to starve,
If I cannot add one Name,
To the membership list and gain fame:
On the honor roll for February I'll
be,
And show the Editor I love the Union
as well as he.

A. LEFKOWITZ.

THE TEACHER'S HEALTH

(Continued from page 8)

to this low salaries and we have before us the teacher's trinity of evil.

The commission makes a long list of recommendations, chief among which are improved sanitary conditions of schools, decreased demands upon time and strength of teachers for making reports and doing clerical and janitorial work,

improvement of standards for supervision and criticism of teachers, reduction of the size of classes when the number exceeds twenty-five, better facilities for physical exercise and recreation for teachers, better salaries in the lower schedules, arrangements for health insurance, sick leave when needed, pension provisions on a sound actuarial basis.

The Commission points out some of the vital defects in the present educational system and recommends important remedial action. Some practical results should be obtained. Other teachers' organizations, including local ones, should continue the work here begun, make local investigations, and bring pressure to bear upon the proper authorities for measures of relief.

A LETTER SENT TO EACH MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Chicago, Illinois,
January 3, 1917.

Dear Sir—

The American Federation of Teachers, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, in convention assembled, in Chicago, on December 30, 1916, protests against the injustice of the amendment to Section 6 of the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill (H. R. 19119), proposed on December 21, 1916, by Congressman Page of North Carolina.

The adoption of this amendment would deny to the pitifully underpaid teachers of the District of Columbia the increases in salaries granted to other public employees of the District. By force of example, it would tend to lower the standards of the teaching profession throughout the United States, thereby working serious injury to public education.

The American Federation of Teachers therefore presents the following resolution:

"BE IT RESOLVED that this body most earnestly asks the Congress of the United States to include the public school employees in the benefits of increased sal-

aries granted to other employees of the District of Columbia."

Respectfully submitted,
CHAS. B. STILLMAN,
President.

MARGARET SNODGRASS,
Corresponding Secretary.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, IN CONVENTION DECEMBER, 1916

WHEREAS in the House of Representatives of the United States an amendment was proposed to the District Bill providing for increased salaries for employees of the District of Columbia, excepting school employees;

WHEREAS this amendment was lost in the House on a point of order, but will come up after January 1, 1917, in the Senate, perhaps again excluding school employees;

WHEREAS teachers are also employees of the District Government and, like other people there, have to meet the greatly increased cost of living, which, while universal in this country, is nowhere more burdensome than in our National Capital;

WHEREAS many teachers in the grades of the schools in the City of Washington receive less than Six Hundred Dollars (\$600.00) a year, which is not a living wage;

WHEREAS the salaries of the teachers throughout the grades, and in the High Schools, are less than is paid by many other cities of this country;

WHEREAS teachers should be free from financial worries, in order that they may devote all their time and energy in teaching and in directing the many student activities which are connected with modern schools;

WHEREAS the Congress of the United States should take the lead in dignifying the work of the teacher, thus making it an attractive profession to our best young men and women;

WHEREAS the future of this country will be determined by nothing more than by the quality of the teachers, who have in their hands to such a great degree the development of character in our children;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this body, "The American Federation of Teachers," most earnestly asks the Congress of the United States to include the public school employees in the benefits of increased salaries granted to other employees of the District of Columbia.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of these resolutions be sent at once to all members of the United States Congress at Washington.

WHAT THEY SAY

To the Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

I want, with this issue, my subscription to THE AMERICAN TEACHER to stop. I have been interested ever since the paper started in some of its program. I cannot, however, support any paper that indulges in personal attack of any fellow-worker or official. It seems to me unprofessional and unethical. I can find no good philosophy or uplift in such material.

Since such publication is permitted in your paper, I do not care to support it even by receiving it to the end of my subscription period.

MYRA T. EDGERTON.

Jamaica High School.

To the Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

Enclosed please find one dollar for two years' subscription to THE AMERICAN TEACHER. Allow me to congratulate you on the November number. It is one of the strongest you have published. The articles on Teachers' Unions and the Fluoroscope pleased me particularly. It seems to me that is the line of endeavor the paper should follow in the future.

A. KOVAR.

P. S. 84, Brooklyn.

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In answering advertisements please mention THE AMERICAN TEACHER.

Resolution adopted by the American Federation of Teachers in Convention Assembled, Chicago, December 30, 1916

The American Federation of Teachers in Annual Convention assembled denounces a long continued tendency in educational administration to punish by dismissal teachers in universities, colleges and schools who have courageously expressed their deep-seated convictions on the professional, social and economic conditions of the present time.

Within the past two years well-known violations of the principle of freedom of speech and opinion have occurred in the summary dismissal of Professor Scott Nearing from the University of Pennsylvania, Professor Brewster of the University of Colorado, and Professor Knowlton of the University of Utah.

As recently as June, 1916, sixty-eight teachers of the City of Chicago, recommended for reappointment by the Superintendent of Schools of Chicago, were refused reappointment by the Board of Education of that city. This act of tyranny was consummated without attempt at justification, without explanation, and in spite of the vigorous protest of a minority of the Board.

The American Federation of Teachers condemns acts of the kind described as destructive of the foundations of character among enlightened teachers everywhere, tending to render them unfit for the task of developing moral character and high standards of citizenship among the youth of the land.

The attention of the public is directed to the fact that another effect of the high-handed dismissal of teachers of independence of thought and judgment is to discourage from entering the profession many able young men and women who might otherwise be of inestimable value to the community as teachers.

The American Federation of Teachers makes its appeal to the public-spirited men and women of this country to come to its aid in the present crisis, and to give effective support wherever possible in helping to reverse the acts of educational officials who in this manner have been faithless to the public welfare; and further, to take steps which in the future will render similar acts impossible.